



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE PRIESTS MISSIONARIES OF THE KINGSHIP OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Tuesday, 8 July 2003

*Dear Priests Missionaries of the Kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ,*1. I am happy to receive you at this special Audience on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the foundation of your Secular Institute. I extend my cordial greeting to your President and I thank him for the courteous words with which he has expressed your common sentiments. My greeting is extended to those present and to all your sodalities located in various nations of Europe, Africa and Latin America, with an affectionate thought for the sick, the elderly and in particular, the youth, who in growing numbers are feeling attracted to the missionary charism of your spiritual Family. Your foundation began on 4 October 1953 in the Church of San Damiano in Assisi. This is a propitious occasion to give thanks to the Lord for all the good fruits that have matured to this day, and to begin again with renewed missionary enthusiasm, proclaiming the Gospel to the men and women of the third millennium.2. According to the original intuition of the Founder, Father Agostino Gemelli, your Secular Institute is described as a priestly fraternity in which each one, faithful to God's design, accomplishes his personal consecration in the service of the Church, seed and beginning on earth of the Reign of Christ (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 5). Inspired by St Francis of Assisi, you live "the priestly ministry according to the model of life that Christ taught to his first disciples, inviting them to leave all for him and for the Gospel" (*Constitution*, n. 3; cf. *Perfectae Caritatis*, n. 2). Continue in this demanding but freeing, ascetic and apostolic route, giving thanks to the Lord every day for the priestly ministry, gift and mystery of divine love.3. Remain faithful to the charism of the Founder, adapting it to the changing social and cultural situations of our times. Your ecclesial service will be fruitful if you maintain constant contact with Christ in prayer, and if you continually cultivate communion with the Bishop and with the body of priests of the Dioceses to which you are assigned. Be joyful and zealous missionaries, generously dedicated to the brothers. The yearning for evangelization pushes you forward to an apostolate that knows no bounds. As I have written in the Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, the spiritual gift received in priestly ordination "prepares them not for any limited or narrow mission but for the widest scope of the universal mission of salvation "to the end of the earth" (Acts 1: 8)... It thus follows that the spiritual life of the priest should be profoundly marked by a missionary zeal and dynamism" (cf. n. 32).4. Beloved, in thanking you for this visit that occurs in the festive setting of the jubilee celebrations of your Institute, I exhort you above all to have holiness as the priority of your existence, which gives being to your many testimonies and teachings of evangelical perfection. The proper spirituality of the Priests Missionaries of the Kingship of Our Lord Christ, that is secular and priestly, represents a significant patrimony to invest for the good of the Church. I consign your priestly Fraternity to the

Immaculate Virgin. May she, Queen and special protector of your Institute, help you to realize the mission that has been entrusted to you for your sanctification and for the salvation of souls. While I assure you of my constant remembrance in my prayer, I bless with affection you, your confreres scattered throughout the world, and those you meet in your daily pastoral work.

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